



NEWS RELEASE

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WEST NILE VIRUS CASE REPORTED IN LANCASTER COUNTY

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department has had its first reported case of West Nile virus (WNV) infection in Lancaster County for the 2010 season. The individual is over 60 years of age.

Most people are infected with West Nile virus after being bitten by a mosquito carrying the virus.

The virus is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus.

Prevention of bites is the best way to prevent West Nile disease. People can avoid mosquito

bites by limiting their time outside during dawn or dusk, prime times for mosquitoes to feed. If

you do go outside during these times, wear lightweight long-sleeved shirts and pants and use

insect repellent on exposed skin. Use an EPA-registered insect repellent such as those with

DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. (Be sure to follow label directions.) Even when you

are only outdoors for a short time that's a long enough time to get a mosquito bite.

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General Precautions Regarding Insect Repellents:

Always follow the instructions on the product label.

Apply repellents only to exposed skin and/or clothing (as directed on the product label.)

Do not use repellents under clothing.

Never use repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.

Do not apply to eyes or mouth, and apply sparingly around ears. When using sprays, do not spray directly on face—spray on hands first and then apply to face.

Do not allow children to handle the product. When using on children, apply to your own hands first and then put it on the child. You may not want to apply to children's hands.

Use just enough repellent to cover exposed skin and/or clothing. Heavy application and saturation are generally unnecessary for effectiveness. If biting insects do not respond to a thin film of repellent, then apply a bit more.

After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water or bathe. This is particularly important when repellents are used repeatedly in a day or on consecutive days. Also, wash treated clothing before wearing it again. (This precaution may vary with different repellents—check the product label.)

If you or your child gets a rash or other bad reaction from an insect repellent, stop using the repellent, wash the repellent off with mild soap and water, and call a local poison control center for further guidance. If you go to a doctor because of the repellent, take the repellent with you to show the doctor.

Note that the label for products containing oil of lemon eucalyptus specifies that they should not be used on children under the age of three years.

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Additional things you can do to reduce your risk:

Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out. Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels.

Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly.

Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out.

Keep children's wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren't being used.

Many people infected with the WNV have no symptoms. If symptoms occur, they may include fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks. Occasionally, a person can experience more severe symptoms that can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, unconsciousness, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.

At this time there are no plans to spray for West Nile Virus. Key factors in the decision to spray include the number of mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus, the virus activity in mosquitoes, and the number of human cases. The Department will continue to monitor these as the summer progresses. During August and September, the mosquitoes that carry West Nile Virus become more common and so does the virus. So, from now until the end of summer if you get bit, it is more likely to be by a mosquito that can carry the virus and your risk of getting West Nile Virus is higher.